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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Jeanne Jaquith DATE 10/6/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXEMPTION DATE ____ REASON(S) ____
TS AUTH. ____
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS ____

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S E C R E T SAIGON 3721

EXDIS

FOR FA-HABIB

SUBJECT: GUESS ESTIMATE ELECTION RESULTS

1. WE HAVE CALCULATED THE PROBABLE OUTCOME OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN SEVERAL WAYS IN RECENT WEEKS AND TRIED TO RECONCILE THE VARYING ESTIMATES WHICH RESULTED. THERE IS, OF COURSE, NO RELIABLE WAY OF ESTIMATING THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF SUCH INFLUENCES ON THE VOTERS AS REGIONAL PREFERENCES, DESIRE FOR CONTINUED STABILITY, ANTI-MILITARY FEELING, AND THE BELIEF THAT THE WAY TO AVOID FUTURE

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TROUBLE WITH THE AUTHORITIES IS TO VOTE FOR THIEU-KY. THUS OUR GUESSTIMATE OF THE ELECTION RESULTS IS STILL BASED AS MUCH ON INTUITION AS ON FACT, AND WE COULD WELL BE VERY WIDE OF THE MARK INDEED.

2. OUR FIRST ASSESSMENT FORWARDED BY LETTER TO HABIB JULY 29 WAS BASED ESSENTIALLY ON THE SIZE AND ESTIMATED COHESIVENESS OF VARIOUS POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, AND ETHNIC GROUPINGS SUCH AS [illegible]E VNQDD, DAI VIET, CAO DAI, HOA HAO,

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CATHOLICS, BUDDHISTS, LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, ONTAGNARDS, KHMERS, CHINESE, ETC. MORE RECENTLY WE HAVE ALSO FOCUSED ON THE SIZE AND ACTIVITY OF CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR APPARENT EFFECTIVENESS AS JUDGED BY OUR PROVINCIAL REPORTERS.

3. OUR INITIAL ASSESSMENT, NOW NEARLY A MONTH OLD, GAVE THIEU-KY 2,275,000 VOTES: HUONG 1,425,000: SUU 590,000: HA THUC KY 225,000: AND THE MINOR CANDIDATE 185,000. (WE ASSUME THAT THE VOTER TURNOUT WILL BE ABOUT THE SAME AS THAT FOR THE SEPTEMBER 1966 ELECTIONS FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, I.E., ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF THE REGISTERED VOTERS. THIS MEANS THE TOTAL VOTE WILL BE ABOUT 4.7 MILLION OUT OF A TOTAL OF ABOUT

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5.8 MILLION REGISTERED VOTERS.

4. A MORE RECENT ESTIMATE, BASED VERY LARGELY ON THE IMPRESSIONS OF OUR PROVINCIAL REPORTERS, IS THAT THIEU-KY WILL POLL IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 1.8 MILLION: HUONG SOMETHING JUST OVER ONE MILLION: SUU ABOUT 875,000: HA THUC KY 350,000: TRUONG DINH DZU JUST OVER 200,000: AND THE OTHER CANDIDATES ABOUT 330,000.

5. THIEU-KY ARE THE FRONT RUNNERS, WITHOUT SERIOUS QUESTION, AT LEAST SO LONG AS BOTH SUU AND HUONG REMAIN IN THE RACE. IF THE ELECTION IS HONEST AND BOTH SUU AND HUONG STAY IN THE RUNNING, WE NOW ESTIMATE THAT THIEU-KY WILL GET BETWEEN 35 AND 45 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. HUONG PROBABLY WILL BE IN SECOND PLACE, THOUGH SUU SEEMS TO BE STRONGER NOW THAN HE WAS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CAMPAIGN. WE ARE INCLINED TO GIVE HUONG BETWEEN 25 AND 30 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. AS MATTERS NOW STAND, WE THINK SUU MAY DRAW ABOUT 20 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, THOUGH HE COULD DO SUBSTANTIALLY BETTER. HA THUC KY MIGHT DRAW 8 PERCENT AND THE MINOR CANDIDATES SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 10 ND 15 PERCENT.

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6. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CAMPAIGN SUGGEST TH T TRUONG DINH DZU IS PROBABLY THE STRONGEST OF THE MINOR CANDIDATES. HE IS VERY ARTICULATE AND SEEMS TO BE EFFECTIVE WITH CROWDS; HE HAS PROBABLY EXPLOITED THE "PEACE ISSUE" WITH MORE SUCCESS THAN ANY OTHER CANDIDATE. HE ALSO SEEMS TO HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO BACK HIS CAMPAIIGN EFFORTS, AND HE ENJOYS THE SUPPORT OF THE TAN DAI VIET GROUP WHICH IS TURNING OUT TO BE MORE WIDESPREAD AND EFFECTIVE THAN WE HAD PREVIOUSLY BELIEVED TO BE THE CASE. WE ARE THEREFORE INCLINED TO RATE DZU AS THE LEADING MIOR CANDIDATE.

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